

Action Report

Solutions to Homelessness in San Mateo County




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Presented to

Board of Supervisors
San Mateo County

by

Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness
August, 1991



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SAN MATEO COUNTY
BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

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August 8, 1991

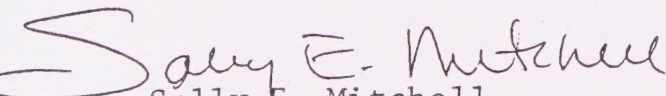
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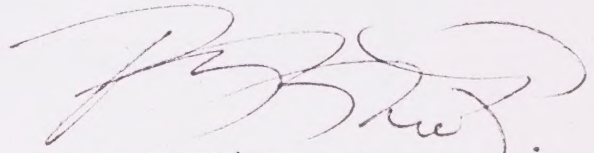
We would like to thank the Board of Supervisors for giving us the opportunity to be a part of the important assignment undertaken by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness. We are pleased to submit the Commission's report.

This report is an important step leading to solutions to the increasing crises of homelessness in San Mateo County. We cannot stress too heavily that the effort invested in this report and the recommendations contained therein are only as valuable as the commitments to implement the programs identified. Although not every member agreed with every recommendation, the Commission as a whole strongly recommends that the Board take action and make this commitment.

Finally, we thank the members of the Commission and staff who expended countless hours in discussions and the preparation of this report.

The Commission looks forward to assisting the Board throughout this process to ensure that San Mateo County is in the forefront in ending homelessness.


Sally E. Mitchell


Frank Pagliaro, Jr.

Attachment

IBMI:5BR - GTR:JW:tk:np

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Connie Cipperly
Gloria Cohn
Garry Cox
John Crockett

Michael Ennis
Morton Frank
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BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION
ON HOMELESSNESS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Commission sincerely appreciates the participation of others who were not members of the Commission, but who were helpful in sorting out issues and adding depth to the discussions. These include Bonnie Bowing from Community Services, Bill Dempsey and Pat West of Housing and Community Development, Linda Steele as former Director of the Hunger and Homeless Coalition, Howard Kalmer of H.K. Associates and Jennifer Friedenbach of the Hunger and Homeless Coalition.

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ACTION REPORT FROM BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Supervisors appointed 18 members to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness in January 1991. This Blue Ribbon Commission was appointed for the specific purpose of reviewing and making recommendations on a report by the Hunger and Homeless Action Coalition in September 1990 called **"Living in the Shadow of Affluence, Homeless in San Mateo County"**. That report containing 41 recommendations is included here as Appendix I.

The mission was to report in six months with two products:

- I. To prepare a limited number of recommendations that address the highest priorities which:
 - a. Can be implemented within a short time frame
 - b. Can support a long range community strategy
 - c. Can be sustained
- II. To recommend a procedure or course of action for County and community follow-up.

The Blue Ribbon Commission divided itself into three sub-committees each meeting independently and then concurrently. The full Commission reconvened regularly to discuss progress and more general aspects of the issues. We found this to be an efficient use of volunteer resources and an effective way to bring synthesis to the many issues.

The three sub-committees focused on the following concepts:

- Short range issues
- Long range issues
- Services and prevention

Each subcommittee addressed individual recommendations contained in the Coalition report, and attempted to synthesize key themes and high priority issues. The end product is a series of detailed recommendations in these three categories, with a general recommendation on how to proceed.

All subcommittee and Commission meetings were open to the public, and some press coverage occurred.

OVERVIEW

The Board of Supervisors is to be commended for its leadership in undertaking many recommendations set forth in the Hunger and Homeless Coalition's September 1990 report. Specifically, the Blue Ribbon Commission is pleased to find that the following activities are underway:

- a sub-regional planning effort to develop affordable housing, with funding from the federal HOME program and local redevelopment agency housing set-aside funds.
- the interdepartmental cooperation between the Mental Health Division and the Division of Housing and Community Development to develop housing for mental health clients.
- work program tasks adopted by the Housing Task Force, including an annual report on the use of RDA funds and the development of a brochure of techniques to reduce NIMBY concerns.
- a recent history of supporting shelter development with public leadership and operational funding.
- continued inter-agency planning and program accountability for the emergency winter shelter.
- linkage with the San Mateo Times for fundraising and public support.
- matching private foundation support for the Hunger and Homeless Action Coalition to coordinate existing services and information.

This Commission proposes additional strategic initiatives for short range and long range impacts. The recommendations that follow ask the Board of Supervisors to commit to the long haul and to take strong leadership; to set the goal of building a broader base of awareness and optimism, and to undertake strategies that attract support over time.

This Commission concluded that sustained and balanced communities are possible and necessary and are in the best interest of all of us. A three to five year community effort is minimally required as follows:

- Start with workable focused actions.
- Build joint efforts and partnerships.
- Measure progress through "report cards".
- Build momentum from small successful steps into larger and larger successes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations are summarized in the Executive Summary Matrix, Graphic A on page 5.

Overall, we have provided a blueprint for policy decisions and the rationale for implementation. It is a planned and workable approach. Implementation can have a significant impact on homelessness.

Level I action:

The Commission recognizes that it is presenting a series of actions that must be dealt with in stages. However, the starting point is commitment to a plan. In order to insure a timely effort, we feel the initial action should address two key issues: **financial resources and accountability**. These are Level I decisions, designed to have immediate impact and to help guide Level II and Level III actions.

- a. **Establish the Trust Fund (financial)**
- b. **Establish Office of Homelessness (accountability)**
- c. **Revise redevelopment set-asides (financial)**

a. **Trust Fund** -- The lack of a reliable source of operating funds for emergency and transitional shelters is the greatest impediment to expansion of services. The Fund will be the key to addressing this problem promptly by providing a vehicle for accumulation and distribution of contributions from a variety of sources.

b. **Office of Homelessness** -- The designation of a responsible individual within County government as the Homeless Coordinator needs to have a suitable mandate from the Board of Supervisors. This will assure that County efforts will be coordinated to increase efficient and economical delivery of services. This position will provide the focal point for implementing other recommendations in this report and for maintaining accountability. There is little prospect of increased public funds to address the needs of homeless adults and children. Careful planning and analysis are necessary to place existing resources where highest impact is probable and where leverage of private funding is possible (including vice versa).

c. **Redevelopment Set Asides** -- Existing redevelopment agency set-asides are accumulating. For various reasons, substantial portions of these funds have not been encumbered. Because of this, we recommend a revision of state law to allow greater flexibility for affordable housing activities and for shelters in order to encourage timely new efforts before financing potential is reduced through inflation.

Level II and Level III actions:

These actions are also designed to have impact. Level II recommendations generally promote and facilitate actions in selected areas. All are intended to lay additional groundwork, build awareness and coalitions of interest, and point out procedural steps and changes that are supportive of the overall strategy.

Level III actions are longer range, and are imminently possible. They emphasize the critical nature of results that are desired for children, for prevention and for affordable housing stock.

All recommendations are explained in greater detail in the report. Some are easier to implement than others. Some are described in more detail than others. The Level I recommendations are highlighted as the starting point.

Executive Summary Matrix

BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Services
improving co-
ordination &
focus

Shelter/Housing
Adequate Supply

Community Support

Accountability

Level I		Trust fund for shelter costs Redevelopment set- asides flexibility		Office of Homelessness
Level II	School services coordination Affordable housing conference Government leadership Coordination & cooperation GA/VRS assessments Employment assistance	Three emergency shelters Surplus lands & resources Housing facilitation	Affordable housing conference Neighborhood workshops Public education	Report card from Bay Area Council
Level III	Children's needs & services Homelessness prevention program	Transportation corridors for affordable housing		

Please see full text of recommendations

THE DILEMMA

At this point in our report, we ask the reader to take a moment to study Graphic B on the following page. It shows the cycles of homelessness. When early assistance is unavailable or fails to help the individual or family, Graphic B shows the downward spiral towards chronic homelessness.

The graphic accurately shows the dilemma caused by the severe shortage of all types of affordable housing. If the inventory of long term affordable housing is not incrementally increased each year by diligent and aggressive local actions, then there will be continual chronic problems with street people (living on the streets, in cars and temporary shelters or overcrowded motel rooms). If there is not a coordinated and assertive effort to provide effective service and shelter assistance as interim and interventional supports, individuals will not be able to sustain themselves, which results in increasingly chronic problems of homelessness.

It is critical that short range goals and long range goals be quickly established and actively pursued. We acknowledge that long range goals, in particular, are difficult to achieve for several reasons:

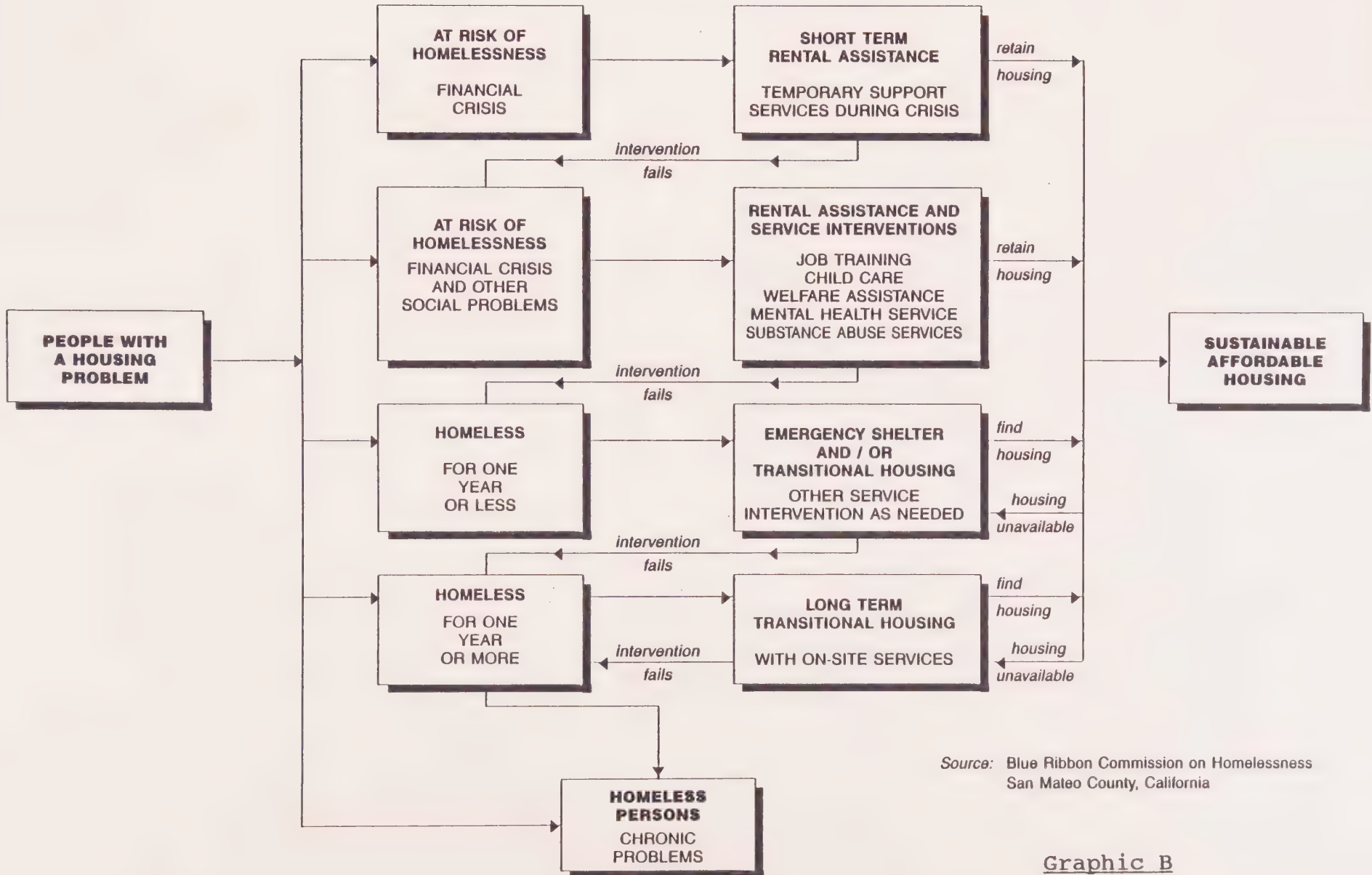
- Current demands preempt time and effort.
- Long range goals are often general and lack focus.
- There may not be a management process to keep tomorrow's agenda in today's work plan.
- Few people are in a position to sustain a long range effort.
- People, events, perspectives and priorities all change.

However, the affordable housing problem is so serious that these traditional impediments must be overcome now. Success in meeting long range goals is based on these relatively simple concepts:

- Define and declare a clear objective (i.e. increase the inventory of affordable housing units per year)
- Set a short time (i.e. 6 months) for the development of the action plans
- Adopt the action plans and provide initial "seed-money" funds to finance the initial implementation
- Sustain the effort and proceed progressively
- Schedule an annual review of progress and modify plans and financing, as needed, to sustain the progress toward the long range goal.

We have defined a long range strategy. We have presented a series of short range actions to begin; all of which are consistent with and supportive of the long range actions. We urge a practical beginning that can break the cycle and start our path for long range solutions.

HOMELESSNESS INTERVENTIONS AND OUTCOMES



Source: Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness
San Mateo County, California

Graphic B

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Graphic C on the following page summarizes the recommendations of the three subcommittees. The graphic is followed by the detailed reports.

- Short Range Recommendations
- Long Range Recommendations
- Prevention and Services Recommendations

Summary of Subcommittee Recommendations

BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Services
improving co-
ordination &
focus

Shelter/Housing
Adequate Supply

Community Support

Accountability

Short-range Committee	School/services coordination Children's needs and services	3 emergency shelters Trust fund for shelter costs Redevelopment set-asides flexibility		Office of Homelessness
Long-range Committee	Housing facilitation	Transportation corridors for affordable housing Surplus lands and resources	Affordable hous- ing conference Neighborhood workshops	Report card from the Bay Area Council
Services/Preven- tion Committee	Government leadership Homelessness prevention Coordination and cooperation GA/VRD assessment Employment assistance	Homelessness prevention program	Public education	Office of Homelessness

Please see full text of recommendations

SHORT RANGE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

The Subcommittee recommends that three emergency shelters for families and singles be established in the three geographical areas of the county.

- It is recognized that at the present time there are groups in each one of these areas that are actively moving forward in establishing such emergency shelters.
- The shelters are proposed to be sited in the vicinity of San Bruno, San Mateo and Menlo Park.
- All three shelters will require political, governmental and financial support and should be designated as a priority within the Housing and Community Development Block Grant Program.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2:

A Trust Fund for the shelter operating costs should be established in San Mateo County.

- Establish a Trust Fund to accumulate monies to be utilized to provide (a) a steady, reliable source of operating expense funds for homeless projects, (b) as matching money for federal and state grants and (c) as funding for immediate special need projects.
- The Trust will be a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation and have an Executive Board as well as a Board of Directors. The Executive Board could consist of one member of the Board of Supervisors, at least one City Council member, a representative of the religious community, a representative from a private foundation, a representative from a public or private social service provider, and a representative from the business community, an attorney and a certified public accountant. The Executive Board would, in turn, appoint a Board of Directors with the intent of representing various elements of the community and persons to assist in the raising of "private" funds.
- The Board of Supervisors will be asked to commit \$1 million to this Trust in the form of an annual matching contribution of \$200,000 per year for the next five years.

- These funds should be matched with each one of the cities in the county asked to contribute a proportionate share of the matching \$200,000 (based upon population percentages in the county) each year for the five year total.
- In turn, each city should be asked to solicit contributions from various groups within its domain (such as service clubs, religious organizations, etc.) to match the city's contribution to the Trust.
- Additionally, the Trust will solicit funds from corporations and private individuals in order to build a substantial endowment or principal within the Trust financial structure. In this manner, it is hoped that eventually the Trust would be able to reserve significant portions of its principal to fund operating expenses of the shelters from the interest earned on that principal.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3:

Support change in law to utilize "set aside funds".

- A number of cities within the county have established redevelopment agencies (RDA) within their jurisdictions. As a concomitant part of the establishment, the law requires that the RDA provide "set aside funds" for low income housing. However, for a variety of reasons, substantial portions of these funds have not been encumbered and may not be spent in the near future. The following chart shows the approximate balances in the various redevelopment agencies at the end of 1990.
- Consequently, the Commission urges the Board of Supervisors, the State Legislature, and Governor Wilson to support a change in the law so that a portion of these set aside funds could be utilized outside of the specific municipal entity (but within the same county area) that had established a redevelopment agency.
- If this legislation were passed, some of these funds could be used by the cities for support of the Trust Fund. It would also allow immediate assistance in the establishment of emergency transitional and other housing that, while located in an adjacent other jurisdiction, would nevertheless benefit their city as well as the entire county community.

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REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING ACCOUNTS

Funds Available on June 30, 1990

Source: State Department of Housing and Community Development

<u>AGENCY</u>	<u>CULMULATIVE</u> <u>FUNDS AVAILABLE</u>	
Belmont RDA	\$ 1,095,576	
Brisbane RDA	489,553	
Daly City	n/a	Note 1
East Palo Alto	0	Note 2
Foster City CDA	1,903,546	
Menlo Park	0	Note 3
Millbrae	0	Note 2
Pacifica RDA	66,084	
Redwood City RDA	699,936	
San Carlos RDA	285,726	
San Mateo City RDA	0	Note 4
So. San Francisco RDA	266,873	
	<u>\$ 4,807,294</u>	

Notes:

- 1) In FY88-89, Daly City reported that 100% of its set-aside requirement was deferred. The amount deferred was not reported. In FY89-90, Daly City did not report.
- 2) Tax increments had not yet been generated by Millbrae RDA and East Palo Alto RDA.
- 3) Menlo Park RDA does not report a housing set-aside fund since 100% of its tax increment is applied to retire debt of over \$10 million for low/moderate income housing.
- 4) San Mateo City RDA reports \$2,659,468 reserved for specific projects.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4:

While providing transitional and permanent housing, coordinate school district participation in the service programs for homeless children.

- The Commission is particularly concerned about the problems faced by the school age children of the homeless within our county. It is difficult for a homeless family to keep its children in the same school during a given school year (not to mention over several years) and to properly clothe and feed them.
- Furthermore, it becomes almost impossible for the family to provide an academic and study environment so that the child can complete each night's homework assignments and thereby progress properly through the educational system.
- The provision of transitional and more permanent housing where a family unit can maintain its integrity and also have available appropriate counseling services becomes the top priority under this recommendation.
- Furthermore, it is felt that the various school districts should be asked to actively participate in efforts to assist the school age children of the homeless. Each school within a district should have a specifically assigned administrator or teacher who should be aware of the homeless nature of a particular student and should assist the classroom teachers in accommodating the special needs of that child.
- The "Office of Homelessness" within the county should schedule roundtable conferences with school districts in order to acquaint them with programs available for assistance and seek input from the educators on their use and modification as appropriate for assistance.
- All of this should create a stronger link between the school districts and the individual schools on the one hand, and the human service agencies and the Office of the Homeless on the other, to the benefit of the children of the homeless families.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5:

Distribute the Stanford Center study on family homelessness, due this Fall, to cities, key County and non-profit agencies and the Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness.

- The Stanford Center for the Study of Families, Children and Youth will complete a two year study and report on the conditions of homeless families and children in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties in late October or early November 1991. Representatives from County government and non-profit agencies have served on a Public Policy Advisory Board during the study.
- The Board should refer the report for review and response to a cross-section of agency and community representatives. This Commission is willing to cooperate with your process to the extent that individuals' time is available.

LONG RANGE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

GOAL

To produce sufficient affordable housing -- emergency, transitional, and long term -- over the next 10-15 years to markedly reduce homelessness in San Mateo County.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

All public jurisdictions take these actions:

- Declare the top priority land use issue for the foreseeable future to be affordable housing, particularly within transportation corridors.
- Declare the production of inclusionary and second unit housing to be a desirable and valid means of creating affordable housing outside of transportation corridors.
- Establish flexibility and organizational facilitation assistance and negotiation of land use, zoning, permit and building code administration to the creation of affordable housing.
- Sponsor and participate in an annual affordable housing conference, followed by neighborhood acceptance and implementation workshops.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors provide countywide leadership by these actions:

- Promote Recommendation No. 1 to be adopted by all appropriate jurisdictions.
- Develop and update as necessary this plan to eliminate homelessness in San Mateo County, and give guidelines for future additional actions.
- Maintain accountability by supporting an active "scorecard" report which documents each jurisdiction's progress toward the goal of adequate affordable housing.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3

Declare transportation corridors as the focus area for affordable housing development.

- Infill of transportation corridors with mixed uses is a more attractive strategy than siting a new use in a homogenous neighborhood.
- The attractiveness of transportation corridors include:
 - (1) known successes in Toronto and Hong Kong, and new commitments in Montgomery County, Maryland.
 - (2) commercial revitalization potential;
 - (3) economies of scale for lower costs;
 - (4) promotion of public transit and decreased reliance on automobiles;
 - (5) less air pollution;
 - (6) less likely to arouse intense opposition;
 - (7) many RDAs include the 101-SP-ECR transportation corridor.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4

Sponsor an annual affordable housing conference in June in conjunction with the Pacific Coast Builders Conference by appointing a steering committee composed of this Commission and other volunteers.

- Follow the housing conference with ongoing neighborhood workshops at multiple community locations to explore, learn about and solicit input on housing needs, implementation plans and issues. Try to overcome fears.
- The purposes are to:
 - (1) explore successful experiences of siting;
 - (2) discuss potential fears and different viewpoints;
 - (3) train individuals in housing and related issues;
 - (4) stimulate non-profits agencies, local organizations and interest groups that might become more active in providing affordable housing.
- Encourage developer partnerships and/or sponsorships that include local non-profits, service clubs, churches or other local organizations that would be committed to neighborhood acceptance strategies.
- Put a more positive image on affordable housing such as employee housing, commuter housing, first ownership housing, handicapped and senior housing.
- Sustain this effort.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5

Apply creative and committed agency and staff facilitation of appropriate development proposals.

- Adopt the philosophy that sustainable communities require more affordable housing, and that more organizational encouragement can be built into the regulation and administration of zoning, codes and permits.
- Practical encouragement includes the following:
 - (1) Inclusionary zoning.
 - (2) Aggressive negotiation of density bonuses.
 - (3) Rezoning excess commercial and light industrial properties in transportation corridors to allow mixed uses of housing.
 - (4) Establish "transition zones" for mixed uses.
 - (5) In order to reduce the expense of development, waive or modify certain fees and review requirements, particularly those that do not endanger the health, safety and welfare of the community.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6

Request the Bay Area Council to generate an annual report card on both objective and subjective local actions. (Use this vehicle to publicize positive efforts.)

OBJECTIVE LOCAL ACTIONS

- Did the jurisdiction have affordable housing approved, in production or brought on line during the year?
- Are shelters and transitional housing allowable or permitted uses?
- Are "overlay zones" for certain housing or shelter development allowed? (Overlay zones establish alternative development regulations consistent with the high priority need for housing. For instance, they might allow for higher densities, different building standards and lower parking requirements.)
- Are "special use" criteria in place for special housing reasons? (Special use criteria define conditions under which development is accepted, and place the burden of proof on opponents to show non-compliance with such criteria.)

- Does the jurisdiction have a development policy that addresses the intention to be in support of appropriate housing development?
- Is there an expedited permit process?
- Does the jurisdiction actively participate in the organization of public meetings, promotion of negotiations between community and sponsor, and facilitation of the process?
- Does the jurisdiction have a Housing Element that quantifies production units and time schedules?
- Does the Housing Element differ or contradict ABAG determinations?
- Does the Housing Element of the jurisdiction comply with the 1988 state law that requires an analysis of special needs of the homeless and the potential need for shelters and transitional housing?
- Does the jurisdiction have a mediation process that can be used to avoid or moderate challenges, delays and litigation?

SUBJECTIVE LOCAL ACTIONS

- What are business associations, service organizations, labor unions, and citizens doing to support affordable housing development?
- Identify such groups that have adopted policies in support.
- Do these organizations back their policies with presentations at public meetings?
- Give anecdotal evidence of significant actions.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 7

Urge more attention on surplus lands and creative use of resources.

- Declare the highest priority use for publicly owned surplus lands to be affordable housing. Urge this among all public jurisdictions with the potential of surplus lands: cities, school districts, special districts and authorities (i.e., SamTrans).
- If surplus land is disposed of for other uses, a substantial portion of the sales price should be committed to assist affordable housing elsewhere (e.g., the Board of Supervisors committed about 20% of the sale proceeds of the Polhemus property to affordable housing).
- Identify and publicize federal, state and local resources available or potentially available for housing (i.e. accumulations of redevelopment agency tax increment financing required to be committed to housing).
- Advocate practical financial techniques that can attract non-governmental and creative financing (i.e., tax credits, creative reverse annuity mortgages (RAMs) by public agencies to leverage and recycle its financing, use a silent second, charitable remainder trusts).
- Create a San Mateo County Homeless Foundation Trust to attract public and private resources, trusts and other significant resources to help leverage development options.
- Develop resource lists of creative techniques and applications.
- Conduct educational workshops on financing and resource options in the public interest.
- Use existing non-profit agencies and human service entities (i.e., Catholic Charities, Shelter Network, Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition, etc.) in the County to execute and operate the affordable housing programs.

PREVENTION/SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

RECOMMENDATION No. 1 (Accountability)

An Office of Homelessness (OH) should be established as part of San Mateo County government. This office will be the central focus for homelessness policy, planning, service coordination, and resources.

Rationale:

- After due consideration, the subcommittee believes that the OH should be administratively located in the County Manager's office in order to provide sufficient status and resources to the position to insure that the incumbent will be able to meet the goals and tasks set forth below.
- The OH would help meet public and private sector service needs for developing and implementing comprehensive, coordinated approaches to:
 - (1) assessing service needs;
 - (2) planning and delivering services;
 - (3) increasing service efficiency and cost-effectiveness;
 - (4) assessing service effectiveness;
 - (5) developing, distributing and using resources;
 - (6) developing and implementing policy;
 - (7) tracking trends (homelessness, poverty, economy, etc.)
 - (8) developing and coordinating regional services
 - (9) developing public-private partnerships for services
- The OH would be a focal point for the coordination and management of homelessness resources in several branches of County government, including the Housing Authority, Housing and Community Development and the Department of Social Services. In addition, the OH would assist the County Manager and the Board of Supervisors with policy choices and resource decisions. The OH also would provide a means for homeless people to influence policy, needs assessment, planning, services and service evaluation.
- A County government homelessness office is appropriate because the County controls significant resources for homelessness programming and is a major policy-maker and decision-maker related to homelessness. This approach has been successful in other Bay Area counties, but only

when there is a clearly stated commitment of full support from both the Board of Supervisors and the County Manager.

Specifics:

- The office will work closely with private nonprofit agencies, the Hunger and Homeless Action Coalition, County government offices (Community Services, Housing and Community Development, Social Services, Health Services, Environmental Management, etc.) businesses, churches, service organizations, and others concerned or involved with homeless people.
- Staffing: One full-time position, plus clerical support.
- Time frame for implementing recommendation: Immediate.
- Funding sources: County, entitlement cities, grants, public-private partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION No. 2 (PUBLIC EDUCATION)

A comprehensive public information and education program should be planned and implemented to promote community understanding of homelessness issues, develop community acceptance of shared responsibility for solutions, promote homelessness prevention, publicize services and service needs, and bring credibility to homelessness issues, services, and solutions.

Rationale:

- There are longstanding and important needs to:
 - (1) increase public involvement in creating solutions;
 - (2) develop resources to address homelessness;
 - (3) promote neighborhood acceptance of programs;
 - (4) bring credibility to homeless issues and programs;
 - (5) promote community flexibility, creativity and responsiveness;
 - (6) promote self-esteem among homeless people.
- Many groups must be addressed including: businesses, citizens of San Mateo County, county and city employees, elected officials, landlords, media, police, realtors, religious organizations, schools and service organizations.

Specifics:

- The information and education program must be comprehensive, planned, and coordinated. It must clearly identify information and education targets, messages and communication strategies and evaluation approaches.
- Program planning responsibility should be shared by the Office of Homelessness, the Hunger and Homeless Action Coalition, and other interested groups or individuals.
- The program can be implemented by a nonprofit organization or consortium of nonprofit agencies with public education capacity under contract.
- Staffing: Consultant(s) with professional expertise in community education, public relations, or public communications.
- Time frame for implementing recommendation: 6 months.
- Funding sources: Foundations and businesses.

RECOMMENDATION No. 3 (PREVENTION)

A pilot homelessness prevention program should be planned and implemented that will help people remain in their homes, help service providers identify people at risk of becoming homeless, and help people at risk to access appropriate homelessness prevention services and options.

Rationale:

- Prevention is a rational, humane and cost-effective approach to the problem. For every family helped to prevent homelessness, at least three more need help but do not receive it. Homelessness can be prevented successfully through a variety of approaches and services, including:
 - (1) rental assistance;
 - (2) housing subsidies;
 - (3) landlord-tenant information and referral services;
 - (4) landlord-tenant mediation services;
 - (5) legal aid services;
 - (6) employment counseling;
 - (7) utility payment programs;
 - (8) housing crisis intervention;
 - (9) access to affordable subsidized housing;
 - (10) case management
 - (11) budget counseling and education.

- Resources invested in homelessness prevention reduce social costs, service system costs, and individual human costs. The effectiveness of the actions proposed in this recommendation depend significantly on the development of housing that can be afforded by people at risk for homelessness.

Specifics:

- The homeless prevention program should be planned by and coordinated among service providers and funders. It should educate providers and consumers about at-risk situations and services. The program should identify and include additional resources for prevention and coordinate those resources to meet needs.
- Groups that would be addressed by and involved in the program include people at risk for homelessness, social service systems, landlords and the criminal justice system, and County government offices (Community Services, Housing and Community Development, Social Services, Health Services, Environmental Management, etc.).
- Program planning responsibility should be shared by the Office of Homelessness, the Hunger and Homeless Action Coalition, and the Core Service Agencies. The program should be implemented by the Core Service Agencies. A toll free Homelessness Prevention Information Hotline should be part of the program (an 800 number).
- Staffing: Core Service Agencies.
- Time frame for implementing recommendation: 9 months.
- Funding sources: Federal, state, county and city governments, redevelopment agencies, and foundations.

RECOMMENDATION No. 4 (GENERAL ASSISTANCE/VOCATIONAL REHAB.)

The current General Assistance (GA) Homeless Program and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) should be assessed to determine the effects of the programs on homelessness, the extent to which the programs meet housing and other needs of homeless people, and the most effective future use of the programs' resources. This assessment should specifically address, but not be limited to the effects of benefit levels, savings limits, and income disregards.

Rationale:

- There are many questions about the use of the GA Homeless Program and VRS resources and the effectiveness of the programs. Some believe that the GA Homeless and VRS programs could be more effective in the future than they have been in the past.
- In addition, there are questions about program regulations and their effect on homeless people and questions about whether the programs are meeting needs.

Specifics:

- The Office of Homelessness should plan and direct the assessment which should be done by independent contractor(s).
- Time frame for implementing recommendation: 6 months.
- Funding source: County.

RECOMMENDATION No. 5 (EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING/PIC)

Request the Private Industry Council (PIC) to research options available to prevent long term homelessness through training to upgrade skills for employed homeless persons or employed low income persons who are "at risk" of being homeless. Report back to the Board of Supervisors with recommendations and funding options.

Rationale:

- 22% of the homeless people interviewed in San Mateo County were employed part or fulltime and most made under \$12,000 a year. A third of the homeless people surveyed said that the best thing that can be done for them would be job training or assistance in finding a job that pays enough for them to find a place to live in San Mateo County.
- In the past unemployed and homeless people have been difficult to serve in existing PIC training programs. PIC has not been allowed to assist working poor.

Specifics:

- The Private Industry Council should research options for creating special training programs for homeless people or people at risk of homelessness.
- Time frame for implementing recommendations: 3 months to report back to the Board of Supervisors.
- Funding sources: State/Federal/Foundations.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

FROM

Hunger and Homeless Action Coalition Report

reviewed by

Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness

Appendix I

List of Recommendations

from

"LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF AFFLUENCE"

Report on Homeless in San Mateo County,
by Hunger and Homeless Action Coalition,
September 1990

Low Income Housing

1. Prioritize lobbying efforts at the federal and state level to support increased federal and state budgets for low income housing development, expand rent subsidy programs for low and very low income people and preserve existing subsidized housing.
2. County take a leadership role with the cities in developing a sub-regional planning mechanism to develop or purchase existing housing for low income people using Redevelopment Agency funds.
3. County Housing Task Force prepare and widely publicize an annual low income housing report card showing the number of low income housing units needed and the number produced, by each city, and for the county overall.
4. Obtain agreement from Mayors of three cities to serve on the Bay Area Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness.
5. County, the Coalition and the cities develop a neighborhood acceptance strategy for low income housing development in the county.
6. County coordinate and manage its existing resources within the Housing Authority, Housing and Community Development and Social Services Department to increase and target the development of a joint program of welfare benefits and housing subsidy for the working poor and recipients of General Assistance and Aid to Families with Dependent Children.
7. County and cities develop at least 12,000 units of subsidized housing and/or rental subsidies to begin to meet the identified need.

Prevention

8. County expand the existing rental loan and rental assistance programs to help families and individuals retain their housing. Special emphasis should be placed on expanding resources to the core services agencies who administer Season of Sharing funds which are raised through donations.
9. Housing Authority seek a waiver of federal regulations to enable rental 1st subsidy vouchers and certificates to be used for those homeless families needing to leave transitional housing programs and obtain permanent subsidized housing.
10. County and Coalition advertise the availability of these services (#8 & #9) through the Landlord Tenant Hotline and at the Municipal Court for people who have already received the Unlawful Detainer form at the beginning of the eviction process.

Preventions

11. County develop and strengthen the Landlord Tenant Hotline so that all calls for assistance can be responded to promptly.
12. Develop a homelessness prevention program county-wide.
13. Landlords be encouraged, through a publicity campaign, to advise their tenants of homelessness prevention services when they first detect that tenants are having difficulty with paying rent.

Services Overall

14. County fix accountability for homeless service planning, coordination and development at a senior enough level in the organization to address the interdepartmental nature of the problem as well as the interface between the county and the cities and the non-profit community agencies.
15. Coalition research homeless self-help and advocacy programs operating elsewhere and in conjunction with the county, create opportunities for homeless experienced people to develop such program in the county and have formal consumer representation about homeless policies and programs.
16. All public and non-profit agencies who serve homeless people and receive county funds participate in a unified and consistent data collection system about homeless clients in order to inform policy makers and funding sources about the extent and nature of the problem.

17. A case management system be designed and implemented county-wide in conjunction with existing service providers.

Children

18. County establish a Homeless Children's Special Task Force to identify and meet the needs of homeless children and youth. This Task Force will include but not be limited to representatives of the Children's Executive Council, Family and Children's Services Advisory Committee, the Childrens Committee of the Hunger and Homeless Action Coalition and the Child Advocacy Council.
19. Coalition coordinate meetings between homeless service providers and the Child Care Coordinating Council to increase the use and provision of affordable child care for homeless families.
20. Ensure that any future development of shelter and transitional housing program for homeless families include adequate facilities for children.

Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing

21. Develop three 24 hour, year-round emergency shelter programs for families and adults with support services and day facilities in North, Central and South county.
22. Triple the county's existing service capacity of transitional housing for homeless families.
23. Triple the county's existing service capacity of transitional housing for single adults some of which should provide specialized services for single homeless people with special needs e.g. Veterans, jail released etc.
24. Develop one more battered womens shelter with an associated transitional housing component.

AFDC

25. Research model programs elsewhere, such as the Emergency Housing Apartment Program in Westchester, New York, and other programs, that will offer these families the choice of accepting decent temporary shelter and will result in more permanent solutions for homeless families.
26. Explore the possibility of developing a pilot program to redirect the use of some AFDC gram for AFDC families that provides long term case management and is linked to permanent affordable housing.

27. Develop housing for AFDC families that is affordable based on the benefit they receive in order to avoid an ever increasing number of these families becoming homeless. This means developing two bedroom apartments for AFDC families that rent for \$200 - \$250 per month.

GA and Vocational Rehabilitation

28. County change the regulations to keep the maximum level of benefit the same after the first month even if rent is not paid because the person is homeless.
29. County increase the savings limit to \$1,000, as has been done in Alameda 1st County, so that homeless people can save enough money while receiving benefit to meet the move-in cost to a studio apartment.
30. County establish a work disregard program for GA homeless recipients who get a job so that there is a positive incentive to obtain and keep employment while receiving GA and a long enough time to find and retain affordable housing.
31. County establish a system for evaluating the effectiveness of the GA Homeless program and the VRS program for homeless people.
32. Since the GA Homeless Program does not appear to do anything to resolve homelessness, public funding should be utilized to develop transitional housing programs for single people, single room occupancy boarding houses and affordable shared housing.

Employment

33. County develop a specific job seeking and employment training program for homeless people that takes account of the special difficulties they face in being job ready when they do not have a place to live.
34. Such a program should prioritize services to those homeless people already working who wish to upgrade their job skills in order to maximize their earning potential and to those homeless people who are recently unemployed.

Mental Health

35. County should continue to support and prioritize the current joint work between mental health and drug and alcohol services to address the needs of dually diagnosed clients who are both mentally ill and substance abusers.

36. County take all possible steps to preserve funding to maintain services to homeless people who are seriously mentally ill, as these services are working effectively and form a critical part of the service system.
37. San Mateo County develop a specific mental services available to all homeless people, not only those with a serious disorder.

Substance Abuse

38. Jointly, the Coalition and the County Drug and Alcohol program will coordinate training for homeless service providers about substance abuse.
39. County develop improved coordination between homeless services and substance abuse services to increase awareness and sensitivity to the special needs of the homeless population and to ensure that homeless people who need substance abuse services and are ready to participate in programs can in fact obtain such services.

Community Attitudes

40. Undertake an extensive public education campaign (a) amongst the business community and general public; (b) concerning the issues of affordable housing and homelessness to enhance understanding and knowledge; (c) to promote their involvement in becoming part of the solution.
41. Undertake specific outreach to business leaders to involve them substantially in addressing the issues of affordable housing in the County.

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